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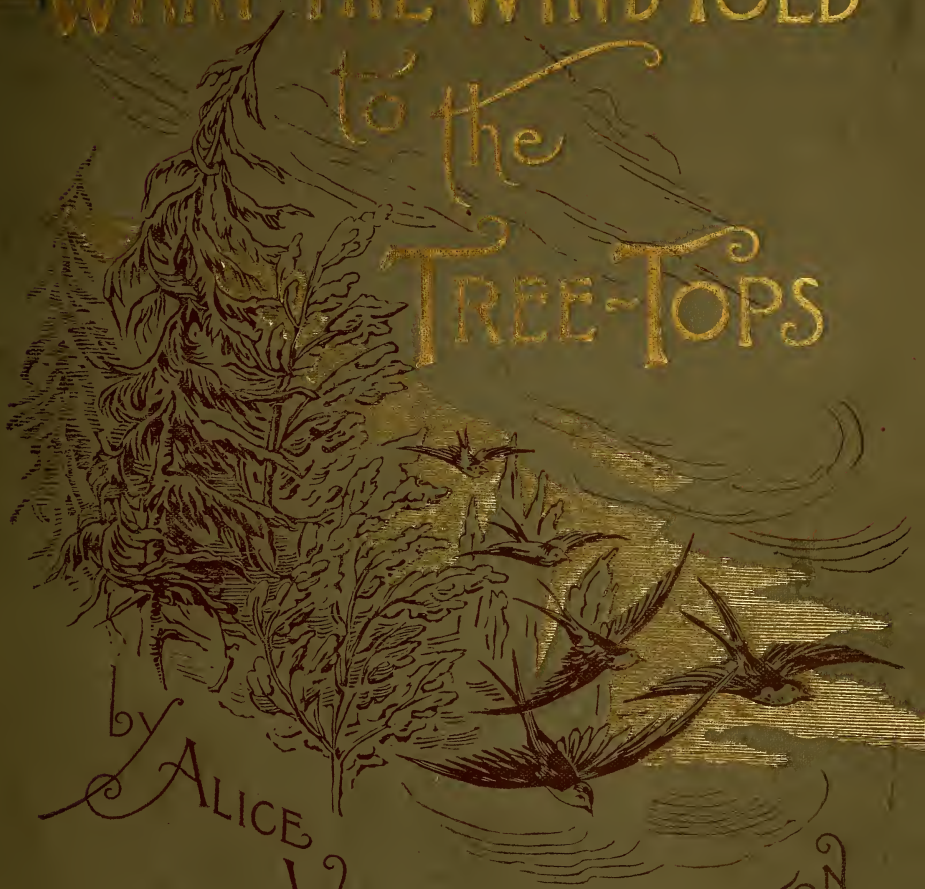
What the Wind Told to the Tree-Tops



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What the Wind Brought

WHAT THE WIND TOLD TO THE TREE-TOPS

BY

ALICE WILLIAMS BROTHERTON

ILLUSTRATED

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TO

FRED, JOHN, AND ISABELLA

AND THE LITTLE COUSINS

GODFREY AND HAROLD

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WHAT THE WIND TOLD TO THE TREE-TOPS.

"HUSH-SH-S-SH!" said the tops of the pine-trees, nodding and beckoning to each other. "Hush-sh-h! the Wind 's coming."

And, sure enough, in another moment there he was.

"Tell us a story!" cried the tree-tops all together. "It 's so stupid standing here alone all day long. We cannot travel like you, Wind. Tell us a story!"

The Wind is a kindly old fellow for all his gruffness, and, not being in one of his blustering moods just then, he reflected that it *was* rather stupid for the trees—this having to stand rooted to one spot year in and year out, with never so much as a summer trip to the mountains or a run across the ocean; so he puffed away a few moments just to get back the breath he had lost in rushing down from the North Pole to carry the Christmas snows to the boys, who were waiting for coasting and snow-balling, and good-naturedly began:

"Years and years and years ago," said the Wind, "when I was not a great wind at all, only a little balmy breeze blowing over a far-away country—"

"What country?" cried two pert little hemlocks.

"Little ones should be seen and not heard!" shouted Wind, knocking their heads together for punishment. "Don't interrupt again. Be polite."

"Blowing over a far-away country," resumed the Wind, "I came to a village nestling among the hills, just in the dark hour before the dawn. The cedars on the hill-tops stirred through all their branches, and the olives and the palm-trees whispered to each other as I drew near, and cried, 'Are you coming to see the child?'

"'Where is the child?' I answered.

"'See, where the Star is shining!' cried the olives. 'There lies one who, the angels say, shall be greatest among all nations.'

"'Where is the palace where this prince is born?' I asked.

"'The Star will show you,' said the cedars.

"Now there was a great star hanging in the heavens, but there was no palace far or near. Only the dwellings of the villagers were to be seen, and a ruined hut which lay upon the outskirts of the town.

"And the radiance of the star shone clear and full upon the wretched hovel.

"'It is there you will find the child,' said the cedars.

"So I followed where the star pointed, and passed through a crevice in the ruined wall and entered the hovel. It was a stable, where cattle were stalled. And on the straw, heaped high in a manger, lay a little smiling child, over whom a young mother bent with happy glances.

"As she raised the babe from its rough cradle, there was a sound of feet without, and the rude door opened to admit three old men with white hair, and eyes dim, like the eyes of those who spend their days in poring over books, and their nights in searching the heavens from the watch-towers of Chaldea. There were servants with them, who bore curiously carved caskets, such as precious things are kept in; and these caskets they laid at the feet of the child.

"Then the wise old men knelt down and spread their gifts before him —spices and perfumes, like those in the warm Indian islands, and gold and gems. You never saw any jewels, poor trees, standing here all your lives; but the gold was like the gold of the clouds at sunset, and some of the gems sparkled like the dew-drops when the morning rays strike them, and others again were green like the grass, or blue as the summer sky, or red like the scarlet poppies in the corn. And the wise men bowed before the little child until their white beards swept the ground; and they foretold how he should be the greatest among the sons of men, and called him King and Lord and chosen one of God.

"Then the mother clasped the baby closer to her bosom, and the little one smiled and stretched its arms towards them as they rose, and

blessed him, and went away rejoicing and prophesying the great things which were to come to pass in the life of the little child."

"Oh, we know! we know!" cried the pine-trees all at once, nodding wisely to each other. "It was the blessed Christ-Child, on whose day one of us is always decked with lights and colored balls and gifts for the little ones. A little bird told us. A little bird once looked in at the lighted windows and saw our comrade trimmed with toys and lights. The little children gathered around and sang a song. This was the song, Wind, the little bird taught us. Listen!

"It was a band of shepherds that watched their flocks by night—
Saw in the dusky heavens a lone star blazing bright.
The while it moved they followed, still guided by its ray,
And found the infant Saviour—born on a Christmas Day.

"It was a host in heaven sang: 'Glory to the Lord,'—
The watchers breathless listened to catch the joyous word—
'Be peace on earth,' it chanted, 'Good will to man for aye,
For Christ the blessed Saviour is born this Christmas Day!'

"Now we no longer fear to see the woodman coming with his axe, for we know whichever one he takes away will be carried into the bright parlor, and the little ones will sing a hymn when the doors are opened, and they will see the tree with the colored tapers and the gifts, and will laugh and clap their hands with glee."

"Yes," said the Wind, "it was the Christ-Child. To-morrow is the blessed Christmas Day. And now I must hurry off. I have to spread the snow all the way from here to Germany, for Santa Claus and his sleigh will pass this way to-night."

And away he rushed.

"Hush-sh-sh!" cried the pine-trees all together. And then a great silence fell on all the trees and the forest slept.

HOW THE CHRIST-CHILD CAME.

THE January Wind came over the hill, driving the snow before him; and this is the story he told to the pine-trees, while the snowflakes floated and eddied, here and there, like a fairy *ballet*:—

Snow everywhere. Snow upon the streets, and upon the house-tops and window-ledges; resting on the blackened branches of the bare city trees; whirling down in spotless flakes from the bleak, gray sky. Now falling solemnly and slow, like a silent benediction—as if heaven would fain see earth "clothed upon" with the white mantle of its own purity—and again, driving swiftly down in a hurrying multitude of feathery flakes, which fluttered, and danced, and circled here and there, and everywhere, like so many little merry living spirits of the snowstorm.

Over the snow-covered pavements, Bertha and Wolfgang had wandered hand in hand for hours, along the crowded thoroughfare.

The busy people brushed past them, hurrying hither and thither; for it was Christmas Eve, and there were countless last purchases to be made for the Christmas tree, or for the little stockings which would hang that night upon the chimney-shelf.

It was rapidly growing dark, and no one noticed the little ones, no one stopped to give the charity which they besought shyly with outstretched hand and pleading voice; and they feared to return to the dingy little room which was all that stood to them for home, without the pennies which the old rag-woman had sent them out to seek.

The old rag-woman was not their mother. Ah no. The kind mother and three little children died long ago—almost six months ago, Bertha had heard the neighbors say—the cholera had carried them off. Bertha was old, almost eight years old; and she could remember how happy

they had been in that far-away country over the sea, when the father was living, and they had a Christmas tree—a little tree planted in a box, and on the branches were lighted tapers and beautiful gifts.

Yes, Bertha remembered all that, and more. There came the time when they all embarked in the great crowded emigrant ship for the New World, where, the father said, there was work and riches for everybody.

But somehow the riches had not come as he thought; and one sad day there came a band of his fellow-workmen, bearing home a crushed and broken body, which was all that was left of the husband and father. He had fallen from a high roof, they told his stricken wife. And then the crushed form was put in a box and borne away, and Bertha never saw it again.

Then came harder times, when the mother only stood between the five little ones and hunger; but they had always a crust to eat until that terrible time when the cholera swept through the city. The mother and the three little ones were carried away to the hospital, and one morning the old rag-woman who lived in the next room of the tenement house, told Bertha and Wolfgang that they were all dead.

After that they lived with the rag-picker. A hard life it was for the two children. All day they gathered rags, or picked cinders from the ash-heaps, and often, when they brought home less than usual, the old woman drove them out to beg for pennies, and would not give them the crusts that formed their supper, until they brought back the money.

To-night they had not even a penny! The genial Christmas time had warmed the hearts of the foot-passengers, and Bertha had collected more than usual; but a great rude boy had snatched the money from the little cold hand of Wolfgang, and run away, and now they were going home, trembling and frightened, with empty hands.

Down the fast-darkening streets they passed with rapid steps; past the gay shops filled with wonderful toys, past the glaring windows of noisy drinking-saloons, turning, at last, into the narrow courts and by-ways near the river.

Through the haunts of squalor and of vice, the two children, as yet untainted by the degrading influences of their surroundings, hurried on

until they reached the entrance of one of those dilapidated tenement-houses, which are alike the refuge and the curse of the poor.

Up the long flights of rickety stairs they climbed, with anxious hearts, dreading the angry words and blows of their harsh task-mistress. But all was silent in the garret; they searched thoroughly, and found no trace of her presence. She had gone, they thought, forth to one of her drunken orgies. And they were right. She had gone, never to return; for a crushed form was even then being borne through the streets. "Run down by a wagon," murmured voices through the crowd, which fell back from the ambulance as it moved away toward the hospital.

It was bitter cold in the garret. Outside the storm raged fiercely, and not even a star shone in at the uncurtained window to welcome their home-coming on this Christmas Eve.

Christmas Eve! And now the lights were blazing in many a church and chapel all over the city; for the faithful held prayer and praise meetings, which were to greet the incoming of the day of Christ with psalms of rejoicing and with invocations of the Spirit. Mass was being celebrated in the great cathedral, and with the smoke of altar tapers and of incense, with the intoning and chanting, and the roll of organ music, floated up hundreds of thank-offerings to the Father of infinite mercies.

And the ears, deafened by the very clamor of devotion, could not hear the "still small voice" which spake unto them, "Feed my lambs!" "The poor ye have always with you!" "Woe unto them that, having ears, yet hear not what the Spirit saith unto the churches!"

In hundreds of happy homes the Christmas tapers burned in many a glittering tree hung with gifts which warm hearts and loving hands had prepared for father and mother, sister and brother, and cousins—out to the last degree of kinship. What of that larger kinship with poverty and suffering, which One, who bade his followers "Love thy neighbor as thyself," recognized through all His life?

Kind hearts and charitable hands there must be somewhere in the vast wilderness of streets and houses; but loving care and sympathy seemed far away from the two orphans who nestled down together on the ragged pallet, and drew over them the coarse sacking which was their coverlet.

Wolfgang cried, but Bertha hushed him with mother-like tones and caresses, and told him of the good Christmas times they had in Germany, and of the quaint customs which prevailed there: how Pelz-Nickel went from house to house to find the good children, to whom Kriss Kringle would bring presents, and to give the naughty ones a bundle of switches.

"Pelz-Nickel came always many days before Christmas," said Bertha. "He had apples, and pretzels, and candies in his pockets. The last time his hood fell back, and he looked like Uncle Hans—but then Uncle Hans did not have a long white beard. But the Christmas tree, Wolfgang! Oh, that was a beautiful sight! It reached half-way to the ceiling, and was all lit up with red and green and blue tapers, and at the very top was a bright, shining silver star! All the branches were hung with bright colored balls, and gilded nuts and cakes, and great oranges, and farther in among the boughs, close to the trunk, were pretty gifts for every child. But at the foot of the tree was the strangest sight of all—a ruined stable, where beasts were feeding in the stall; there were little wooden figures of the oxen, and of the good Mary and Joseph; and the holy Babe was lying in the little manger, and the three wise kings were bringing the gifts to the Blessed One.

"The father and mother were there beside the tree, and Uncle Hans and Aunt Greta; and before they gave us the gifts, we sang a song—Marie and Carl and Lotta and I; not you, for you were too little. It was the little song that Papa said the poet Heine made:

"The Holy Three Kings from the Morning Land,
They questioned in every city—
'Where lies the way to Bethlehem,
Dear lads and lasses pretty?'

"The young and the old they know it not,
The three kings farther wander;
They follow a lovely golden star
That sparkles brightly yonder.

"The star stood still over Joseph's house,—
It was the place they wanted;
The oxen lowed, the little child cried,
The Holy Three Kings they chanted.

"Above the tree hung a floating image of the Christ-Child, with his hands stretched out as if he blessed the tree and the gifts; and when the song was ended, Mamma said: 'The wise men of the East brought gifts to the little child Jesus when he lay on his mother's lap, and on the eve of Christmas we also give good gifts to our children, in remembrance of the Saviour who was once a child like you. Be good children always, so that the Christ-Child may love you, and say to you what He said to those Galilean children: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of Heaven."'

"Papa reached down the presents from the tree; mine was the jointed wooden doll, with green slippers and a red dress, that I lost on the big ship. And Carl had a new pair of skates, and Marie a picture-book. Lotta's present was a bright new hood, and you had a rattle and new red shoes."

"Have Marie and Carl and Lotta gone to be with the Christ-Child?" asked Wolfgang.

"Yes," replied Bertha, "all good children go to him when they die."

"Oh, I want to go too! I want to go too!" sobbed the little boy.

"Hush, Wolfgang, hush!" said his sister. "No one can go until He sends for them. Stop crying, Wolferl! Hush, now, and I will sing you another song that mamma taught me!" and then, in the chill darkness, Bertha's clear childish voice sang the words of the perfect Christmas carol which Hans Christian Andersen has written for all the children of the world:

"Child Jesus comes from heavenly height
To save us from Sin's keeping;
On manger straw, in darkest night,
The Blessed One is sleeping.
The Star smiles down,
The Angels greet,
The oxen kiss the Baby's feet!
Halleluiah, Halleluiah,
Child Jesus!

"Take courage, soul, in grief cast down,
Forget the bitter dealing;

A child is born in David's town,
To touch all souls with healing !
Then let us go
And seek the Child,
Children like him, meek, undefiled.
Halleluiah, Halleluiah,
Child Jesus !"

Long before the song was ended, Wolfgang slept ; but Bertha lay awake a long, long time, thinking of the old days in Germany, and wondering if the Christ-Child ever came to little children who had no father or mother.

Suddenly Wolfgang started from his troubled slumber, crying : " Bertha ! The Christ-Child ! Did you not see him—and the tree, and the mother, and all ? *Ach*, He is gone ! But you saw Him ! "

"' No, Wolfgang," she replied. " He was not here."

" But He spoke to me," cried little Wolfgang, " and pointed to the tree and the lights ! "

" It was a dream, Wolferl. For you were asleep, and there was no one here at all ; for I have been awake so long—oh, so long ! "

" Could He not come in a dream, Bertha ? It was so beautiful. The tree was there. There were gilded nuts on it, and red and yellow tapers, all shining ; and apples and big oranges, and a little silver star at the very top ! And on the ground at the foot were figures of Joseph and Mary, and the blessed Babe in the manger, and the three wise kings with gifts.

" Papa and Mamma was there by the tree—and the three little ones, and you, Bertha, and me ! And we sang the little song about the Holy Three Kings.

" And the Christ-Child himself was there. He pointed to the tree, and to the dear father and mother, and said : ' See, Wolfgang. You will not be tired and cold any more, poor children ! for I will send for you to come to me.'

" Was it a dream then, only, Bertha ? Then I want to dream again ; for it is so cold and dark here ! Oh, do you think that Krist-kind has forgotten us ? " And the little fellow sobbed piteously. Bertha was crying too.

It was cold, bitter cold; but soon they did not feel it; for a numbness crept over them which was so like comfort that they grew sleepy. Wolfgang had sobbed himself into quietness and in a little time slept soundly. Bertha drew the little form closer in her arms, and prayed to the good God to remember them, and soon she too slept.

Slept so heavily that she did not hear the door when it opened some hours later, nor the footsteps of the three men who entered. These were the City Missionary and his fellow-laborers, whose task it is to seek and find forsaken children in the slums of the city, and bring them into the shelter of a Children's Home, where they may find comfort and help and if not mother-care, at least, its best substitute—kindness and gentle instruction. They had heard of the children from the dying rag-picker, and had lost no time in seeking them.

Pausing beside the wretched pallet the missionary said to his comrades, "These must be the children." Then, waking Bertha, he said to her, gently, "Come with me."

"Is it the Christ-Child?" cried Bertha, with half-open eyes.

"No, little one!" said the kind voice of the missionary; "but it is one whom the Christ has sent to you."

"Come, Wolfgang!" cried the child, shaking the little form beside her. "Come! wake up, and come to the Christ-Child!"

But the closed eyelids were closed forever, and the little hand fell limp and lifeless from her grasp. In the darkness and the silence Wolfgang had gone to the Christ-Child.

"He will never be cold or tired any more," said the good missionary to the weeping Bertha, as he carried her swiftly through the dark streets. "He has gone to a place where the children are never hungry or sad."

"He is with the dear mother and the little ones," sobbed Bertha; "that is what the Christ-Child said."

The missionary made no answer; for at that moment they passed up a flight of broad stone steps, and as he rang the bell the great door opened and disclosed the light and warmth and comfort of the Home.

And that light and warmth has enfolded Bertha ever since. In the shelter of the Home she learns daily how to grow into a good and useful

woman. No more cold and hunger and blows! And one day perhaps she will go—as so many of the Home children have already gone—out into the far West to find another home in some settler's house as a helpful servant in the family, until at last she marries some sturdy farmer and makes yet another and a dearer home for herself.

THE FEBRUARY WIND.

"A STORY?" puffed the February Wind: "A story? Here is a *song* instead!"

THE BOY WHO PLAYED TRUANT.

There once was a lad who, I 'm sorry to say,
Had contracted a habit of running away;
His tasks he left *un*done, his school—he forsook it:
On every occasion this youngster would "hook it."
A lad so bad
Nobody e'er had,
And his family all felt exceedingly sad.

But one day, on his travels, he chanced to meet
A very odd man at the end of the street—
A personage yellow and lank and weird,
With a glittering eye and a snow-white beard—
So queer, my dear!
With a look wan and sere,
And clad in a *very* remarkable gear.

Quoth he, "I 've been waiting for you! How d' ye do?"
"Hullo!" cried Tommy, "I don't know *you!*"
The stranger stared at the lad with a grin,
And answered at once, in a voice rather thin,
"Is it true that you—
Great Hullabaloo!—
Have never yet heard of the Wandering Jew?"

Tom shivered and quivered, and shook in his shoes.
"Don't try to escape," said the man—"It 's no use!
For now that your wand'ring is fairly begun,
You must come with me for a bit of a run
To Soudan, Yucatan,
And the Sea of Japan,
And the far-away island of Great Palawan."

So he gathered him up by the hair of his head,
And over the sea and the land he sped;
All puffing and panting he whizzed and whirled
In a very short time round the whole of the world:
To Sooloo, Saccatoo,
Tananavirou,
And the towering height of Mount Kini Balu!

Just stopping a moment (Tom thought it was luck, too!)
To take one long breath in the town of Timbuctoo,
Then off like a flash went the Wandering Jew
To Khiva and Java, Ceylon and Peru,
Madeira, Sabara,
The town of Bokhara,
The Yang-tse-kiang and the Gaudalaxara.

He scorched his skin where the cactus grows,
In the Arctic Circle his toes he froze,
He thawed him out in the Geyser Spring,
And set him to dry on the peaks of Nan-ling;
Then off to Kioff
And the Sea of Azof,
He hurried, just pausing at Otschakoff.

And finally, all of his journeyings past,
He dropped him at his own door at last,
And said, with a grin, as he hurried away,
"You 'll not play truant for many a day!"
Tom's eyes!—their size,
From grief and surprise,
My pen cannot picture, however it tries.

Now, nothing on earth will tempt him to roam;
He never is seen half a mile from his home.
Take warning all boys, and never, oh, never,
Play truant on any pretext whatsoever:
Lest you, sirs, too,
Whenever you do,
Should chance to meet with the Wandering Jew!

THE MARCH WIND'S STORY.

"THIS is how it all happened," said the March Wind—a great blusterer, but good-hearted for all that. "The people over the way would tell the story differently; but the people over the way know nothing at all of the real facts. I know, for I had the story from the Elm Tree, which was an old acquaintance of the Cottage Chimney.

"It was all its own fault," said the Elm Tree. "One should never give way to ill temper, for there is no telling to what lengths it may lead. The Cottage Chimney might have been standing to this hour but for its own evil temper."

The owner of the cottage was a miser. He owned a number of the finest houses on the street; but he had lived for years in this old cottage, with the same rickety old chimney.

It may have been that this long companionship caused the chimney to come in time to resemble the master, at any rate the one was just as queer and cranky as the other; the man was the oddest bent and wizened creature, and the chimney was like no other chimney you ever saw; it had only a few bricks at base to support it; the rest of it was partly tin-sheeting and partly a long piece of stove-pipe, and on top it wore an odd conical cap. The man quarrelled with all his neighbors; the chimney likewise was incessantly bickering with every thing around it. It quarrelled with the trees in the physician's yard, with the sign-board over the way, with the wind and the tiles of the roof; but above all it reviled the chimneys on the neighboring houses, and called them "haughty aristocrats" and "stuck-up noodles." "They look *down* upon me," cried the Chimney; and the stupid old thing never would understand that it was

its own disagreeable temper, not its lower station in life, which caused the other chimneys to dislike it.

The Chimney had one habit which made it a nuisance to the whole neighborhood. It smoked. Every thing had been done to cure the fault, but still it smoked. Now smoking is a bad habit even in a man, but in a chimney it is simply unpardonable. But little did the Chimney care for that; whenever it was out of humor (which was nearly all the time) it puffed great volumes of soot and smoke into the neighboring windows and down upon the clean washed clothes that the maids had hung to dry in the yards, and upon the passengers on the sidewalk.

It was forever discontented and envious. It could not endure to see others having a good time, and was always happiest when it had done something to spoil their enjoyment.

When the lady next door had visitors, and it heard lively voices and laughter in the parlors, straightway it sent dense black clouds of smoke right into the windows, till nothing could be heard but sounds of coughing and strangling.

Once it heard two of the little girls talking about a party. "I am going," said one. "My new white dress is just finished, and I shall wear blue ribbons." "Yes, you can go to parties," snarled the Chimney. "No one ever asks *me* to parties!" and seeing the windows of the bedroom open, it began to spit great flakes of soot into it; they fell on the counterpane and on the toilet table, and all over the pretty white dress and the blue ribbons which lay upon a chair by the bed.

How the child cried! But the Chimney creaked noisily and waved its cap for delight. (The people over the way said: "How the wind sways the cap of the old Chimney about!" But that was just all they knew about it—it was the Chimney itself that waved its cap.)

The other chimneys and the trees and the flowers were always glad to see the children; but the Cottage Chimney could not endure them patiently. It always smoked worse when the children of the physician—who lived in the house beyond the Cottage—came into their pretty yard to play their games. One day, when the little ones were laughing and calling to each other joyously, it said to the chimney upon the physician's

office: "The tiresome little wretches! I am tempted to dash myself down upon their heads, I am so sick of their senseless noise." "But that," said the Office Chimney, "my master would call 'cutting off one's nose to spite one's face.'" The Cottage Chimney did not see the application of the remark, for it had no nose. And that, too, was clearly a wise arrangement, for if it had one what could it have smelled save the soot? Yes, it was much better without a nose.

One night there was a party at the lady's house. There was music and dancing, and one of the ladies sang a beautiful song. The windows of the supper-room were open, and the Chimney could look right in upon the ladies and gentlemen talking and eating ices and frosted cakes. Everybody looked bright and happy, and especially the two young people by the last window, who were lovers, and therefore would have been happy anywhere; and the sound of the dance-music and the merry voices floated out on the air.

That the old Chimney could *not* stand! It choked with rage and turned black in the face. (Only one could not perceive it, because its natural color was already so dark.)

"Ho," cried the Chimney, "this is really too much! that they should revel and dance and make merry, while, I 'll wager my cap, no single one of them all gives me a thought!"

Now only the day before it had heard the physician say to a friend: "That old chimney may give us all trouble yet. If the cottage should burn, it might be hard to save the adjacent buildings." And now it thought of the physician's words.

"I have it in my power to disturb this senseless merry-making," it fumed; "I have but to move myself a little to one side, and the hot cinders, instead of spitting from my mouth, will fall on the roof, which is dry as tinder. That would make a fine end to their sport!" And the spiteful old thing forgot every thing but its own evil temper, and swayed itself to and fro until it had moved quite a distance.

All happened as it had said; in a moment the roof was in a blaze.

Now it chanced at that very moment the watcher in the tower of the engine-house, whose duty it is to keep a lookout for fires, had just stepped

forth on his wooden balcony to take a survey; and casting his eye on the first block of houses, he saw that a little cottage had caught fire.

Quick as thought the news flew to the firemen below. The engineer lighted the fire which is always waiting beneath the boiler of the steam-engine, the driver sprang into his seat, the red-capped firemen swarmed up to their places about the smoke-stack, the white horses which stand always ready harnessed, were backed into their places and the traces fastened, the great doors of the engine-hall rolled back with the rumble of an earthquake, and in less time than it has taken to tell it, the engine rushed out of the hall and along the streets with sparks dropping along its track, clattering, rattling, and rousing all light sleepers as it careered through the town on its errand of mercy.

But the Cottage Chimney knew nothing of all this. No, it exulted wildly in its wicked triumph, and croaked and chuckled gayly as it watched the flames grow larger and brighter, and almost took its last nail out of the roof that it might dance about in its glee.

The smoke poured down upon the next house, and the dancers rushed to the windows. The men grew pale and the women wept, and the little children in the physician's house ran out upon the balcony in their night-clothes, and cried piteously as they watched the flames which were now spreading over the whole roof; and the miser began with sighs and groans to move out his goods; but the Chimney rejoiced in it all, and cried: "At last they find I am of some consequence—the selfish people!"

Rattle, bang, clash! came the engine round the corner; and in another moment the firemen were on the roof with the hose, the engine was pumping furiously, and the water poured in a flood upon the flames. Yet still the sparks flew wildly about. "It is the fault of the old chimney," said the firemen, and at once they set upon it with axes, and battered and hacked and chopped it until it fell quite to pieces, and they threw the fragments down into the street. In a little time the flames were entirely quenched, and the people went back to their dancing, and the physician's little children returned to bed.

Of the old Chimney nothing remained but a few pieces of iron and tin-sheeting, which were gathered up by some little boys next day and sold.

"That is always the way," said the Office Chimney to the Elm Tree, "when one is surly and vain. Spitefulness and envy react upon one's self."

And now you know how it all really happened.

But the people over the way said: "The wind moved the old Chimney so that the sparks fell on the roof." Some people must always account for every thing in their own stupid way!

" That is the Blessed Lake. The angels holy
Right down from heaven the wee babies bear,
And lay them there."

THE STORK'S GIFT.

THE roystering April Wind came with a merry dash of rain-drops that washed away the last particles of dust, and set the pine-trees dancing for very joy. "A story?" said the Wind, as the tree-tops proffered their request; "wait a minute till I recover the breath lost in tearing up that last hill, and you shall hear one little Wolfgang told to Hans, as they sat on a doorstep in Germany this very morning. I 'll call it the story of

THE STORK'S GIFT.

Just see the storks upon the high roof stalking!
Beside the chimney yonder, to the west,
They built their nest;
So close beside it they could hear the talking
Of people sitting in the chimney nook—
Could even look

Right down and see them too! For storks like people,
Poor people best of all, I think. You see
On bush or tree
They will not build, nor by the tall church steeple,
Nor even on the castle's stately towers;
But roofs like ours

They choose, where they can watch the children playing.
They bring a blessing, too, the old folks tell,
Where'er they dwell,—
And if we go to sleep, Hans, without praying,
They know and tell the angels; so with care
Repeat your prayer.

In the warm summer noon the old stork-mother,
Sitting half-dozing on her nest one day,
Heard Mamma say :
" Wolfgang is lonesome. If he had a brother
It would be well for him. I wish we had
Another lad ! "

When at sunset the father-stork came flying
Back to the nest, the kind old mother-bird
Told what she heard,
And said : " They 're honest folk, there 's no denying ;
Go where you will, I 'm sure we cannot find
Any so kind !

" They 're good to us. They give us crumbs and barley ;
Come, let us give them something in return,
That they may learn
To love us too ! " So, that same evening early,
They rose, and spreading their great wings in flight.
Passed out of sight.

They flew and flew, above the tossing ocean,
Over the mountains grey and forests deep,
And towns asleep ;
And when at last they ceased their rapid motion
Beside a lake, scarce ruffled by the wind—
What did they find ?

Why, scores and scores of little babies, sleeping
Among the lily-pads, on the broad leaves,
Rocked by the waves !
The father-stork, among them gently creeping,
Chose one, a little boy with eyes of blue—
And that was you !

That is the Blessed Lake. The angels holy
Right down from heaven the wee babies bear,
And lay them there.

All-Father watches them. The wind chants slowly
Sweet lullabies ; and all the place is bright
With soft moonlight.

It is so calm and still ! The babies lie there,
So gently rocked upon the warm blue lake,
They never wake.
And only storks can ever find the way there,—
Because the storks love children they may come
To take them home.

Upon their backs they lifted you, and flapping
Their wings, flew back the way they came before,
Till at our door
They 'lighted. Mamma said she heard them tapping
Just at midnight, unbarred the door with care
And found you there.

And then the pastor came and crossed and blessed you,
You know, and gave you Johannes for a name.
That 's how you came.
I saw you in the cradle and caressed you—
You were so little—see, as small as that ;
So soft and fat.

I saw you before Papa. To the city
He had been summoned just the day before.
And at the door
I met him, calling : " Hurry ! something pretty
The storks have brought us. See—a little child ! "
Then Mamma smiled.

And Papa said : " The storks bring luck ! " and kissed her
That 's why I love the birds so much, and you
Must love them too.
Let 's ask them, Hans, to bring a little sister—
Next time they journey to the lake—to play
With us all day.

THE FORGET-ME-NOT.

"JUST at midnight," said the May Wind, "the flowers we call Forget me-nots are granted, for one hour, the gift of speech."

"'Listen!' said the Forget-me-not last night as I rested in a garden, 'and you shall hear why we are so blest beyond all other blossoms.

"'In the garden of Paradise, when the pure Eve walked among the flowers and gave each a name, according to her liking, all flowers and plants had a language of their own, and this it was given to Eve to understand; and during the long hours she conversed often with them, and they told her many things; but, above all, she loved the tiny blossoms of a little blue flower, and kissed it often, and twined it in her sunny tresses. And the flowers all loved her, but, best of all, the little blue flower, which she named Heaven-blossom,* because its hue was so like that of the skies.

"'But at length came the dark day when sin entered into Paradise, and the Lord commanded the pair to leave their Eden-garden, and wander in the bleak wilderness, beyond the gates. And as, for the last time, the weeping Eve passed, hand in hand with Adam, through the fragrant lanes of Eden, the flowers shrank trembling from her, and bowed their heads with shame, or gazed scornfully upon her; and this, more than all else, rent the heart of Eve,—that those whom she had named and caressed and called her children, should shrink away from her in scorn and shame: and her tears fell faster and faster, so that, when she reached the gates where stood the Cherubim with that flaming, terrible sword, she scarcely

* Himmel-blümchen in German.

saw at her feet the little tuft of Heaven-blossom, until it murmured, in piteous accents, "Forget me not!"

"'Eve bent down and plucked the tiny plant, which shrank not from her touch, but nestled lovingly toward her, and she pressed it to her lips and to her sorrowing heart. Then she turned, and, with one long sad look upon her lost kingdom, went slowly out, past the Cherubim and flaming sword, into the bleak wilderness; and all that remained to her of the glorious bloom of Paradise was the one little sprig of Heaven-blossom which she held in her hand. "Be no longer named bloom of heaven, dear blossom!" cried the grateful Eve; "henceforth I shall call you by a dearer name—my Forget-me-not."

"'So Eve kept the flower near her through all the dark days that followed; and when Adam had made for them a home in the new place, she planted it, and tended it carefully, and it became to her an emblem of that old life of purity and happiness before the fall.

"'In time, this new land also was enriched with many flowers, some of them even as beautiful as those of the lost Eden; but, best of all, Eve loved the tender Forget-me-not; and later, when the little Cain and Abel played around the home, she told them the story of the faithful flower, and they, too, grew to love and cherish it, and it told them many and many a story of the glories of that garden of Paradise, wherein the angels had walked and talked with their parents of old.

"'And when Eve died, the loving flower covered her grave with thick clusters of its blossoms. And I am sure that the first flower that met her sight in that new life beyond the tomb, was her dear Forget-me-not.

"'The children of Adam long cherished the little blue flower; but after many years, when the world became more and more wicked, and the hearts of men were turned away from God, they lost the power to understand its language.

"'When the waters swept away after the Deluge, the first plant that blossomed was the Forget-me-not, but it no longer spoke to the children of men. It was voiceless for long, long years; until, one day, a child upon the hills of Galilee bent down and kissed its blossoms clustering in his path.

It was the Christ-Child! And from that hour, each night at midnight, if one who loves flowers listens, the blossoms of the Forget-me-not may tell this history.

"'Hark! the Cathedral chimes are striking the first hour after midnight. I have spoken. Adieu!'

"The flower drooped drowsily upon its slender stalk, and was silent."

IN THE MEADOW.

UP from meadows scented with clover, swept the warm Wind of June, humming to itself a little song it had learned that morning from the meadow-lark:

Lady Pink Clover in kirtle of green
Dances as light as a wee fairy queen:
You may search, if you will, the wide meadow all over,
And find none so fair as my Lady Pink Clover.

Courtly Sir Blue Grass, with sword by his side,
(Such a keen grass-blade!) is seeking a bride:
He 's nodding and bending, and bowing away,
And wooing Pink Clover the whole of the day.

Pretty Pink Clover is cruel and coy,
Pouting and flouting, her love to annoy;
Flirts with the butterflies, nods to the bees,
Sighs to the dragon-fly,—sly little tease!

Fie, naughty Clover! How can you act so?
Have done with this folly! You love him I know.
Who 's like Sir Blue Grass, so lissome and tall?
His plume on the breeze dances lightest of all.

Count me the knights of the meadow, and see,
None is more graceful and slender than he.

Fix the day, Clover—to-morrow, at least!
Bid all the meadow to come to the feast.
White Clover, Buttercup, Violet Blue,
Spider and Cricket, and Grasshopper too,
Bindweed and Millet, and Timothy tall,
Haste to the wedding! Come one and come all!

THE STORY OF A GERANIUM.

"AS I passed through the wood to-day," said the July Wind, "when there was a children's picnic, some of the little ones were clustered around a lady, who was telling them a story; so I played gently around them, lifting their curls and kissing the little rosy cheeks, while I listened to the tale, which she called

THE STORY OF A GERANIUM.

It was a beautiful plant. The leaves were green and bright, and free from the dust that rested on the city street, and the flowers were a vivid, glowing scarlet, like a flame. It stood in the second-floor window of a wretched tenement-house: two dingy muslin curtains fluttered beside it. These were all one could see of the furnishing of the room; for beyond all was dark, the eye could not penetrate.

I wondered to see the lovely flower in such a place, and I smiled a "Good-morning" to it, and it answered me back again, "Good-morning," and told me its name was Blumlein; for the flowers have truly a language of their own, and to those who love them dearly is given the power of understanding it; so though our words were inaudible to the people in the street, yet we comprehended one another.

This was all for several mornings. I greeted it as I passed each day, and it greeted me again from the dusty window-ledge where it stood in its dark background between the white curtains.

One day occurred something more. The flower was not alone; beside it was a child's face—a boy's; but it was not bright and glowing like the flower. Ah, no. It was white—as white almost as this paper I write upon; only the eyes were dark and bright, and the golden hair fell

softly over the pale forehead ; a little crutch, too, leaned against the window-sill. My heart was sad, for the little crutch and the pale, pale face told of long days and nights of weary suffering ; but I drove back the tears that were springing, and I smiled and nodded a bright " Good-morning " to the little face, and the flower and the little face smiled and nodded a bright " Good-morning " back again ; and so it was for many days. Sometimes the little face was not at the window, and then I knew the child had passed a weary night of pain, and had perhaps only just fallen into an uneasy slumber ; at other times it was in its place beside the flower, and then it had always a smile and a nod for the strange lady ; but the flower was always there, rain or shine.

One morning the flower spoke further. When it had answered my greeting, I said: " Why is it, dear Blumlein, that your leaves are green and free from dust, and how do you preserve your flowers always so bright, while those in the rich lady's garden over the way are dingy and faded ? " Then it answered:

" Yes, I will tell you, but you must keep my secret for a little time, and afterward you shall tell it to the children. It is because I am striving to do good, that I have power to bloom thus brightly and continually, and to shake myself free from the dust. I am here that I may cheer the little boy who is poor and lonesome, and has few pleasures like other children, but must always be tied to this room, moving only from bed to window, and back again, by the aid of his crutch. When he is sad, he smiles if his eyes does but rest upon me, and at night I stand upon the little table by the bedside, among the bitter medicine phials, that, when he lies awake in the long night hours, as he so often does, he may see me near. It is not so pleasant here as in the garden over the way ; the atmosphere is hot and stifling, and the people in the neighborhood coarse and noisy, but I am moved by something better than pleasure. It matters little how unpleasant are one's surroundings, if one really means to do good. I forget the wretchedness about me when I am striving to fulfil my kindly mission. I shall stay with the child until he leaves the earth, and he must do so soon, for he grows weaker day by day. When he dies I have accomplished my task, and shall be trans-

planted to the heavenly garden where I shall bloom for ever; for this is the reward our Lord bestows upon each flower that lives for something beyond beauty and display."

Then my heart was ashamed of certain foolish repinings which it had indulged, and I said: "Dear Blumlein, I thank you for this lesson. If a flower can do this much for duty, how much more should a human soul find its true delight in doing good. You teach me that one should not despise the smallest opportunities for usefulness. I will put away from me my repinings and discontent, and strive to find a real satisfaction in the humble task which Providence has placed in my way, nor let it embitter my heart because grander deeds have not fallen to my lot."

"See, now!" said Blumlein, "that *also* was a part of my mission."

The next morning the child was again at the window, but now it rested on pillows heaped in a great chair, and the eyes were less bright and the little face was even whiter than before, and the smile with which he returned my greeting was faint and wan. The leaves of the flower, too, drooped slightly, but the bloom was as bright as ever.

After this the pale face appeared no more, and I knew the child was dying fast. Blumlein was absent, too, for many days. It was in its place beside the bedside of the little one. One morning, though, it was again upon the window-ledge, but oh, how changed! The leaves hung limp and wilted on the drooping stalk, and the flowers were wan and discolored. It could scarcely lift its languid head to return my greeting, and it said in feeble tones: "The child is dying. We shall soon be gone from earth, and the angels will bear us both into the heavenly garden. Here I shall see you no more, but we may perhaps meet again in that other world." And it drooped again listlessly upon its stalk as I passed on.

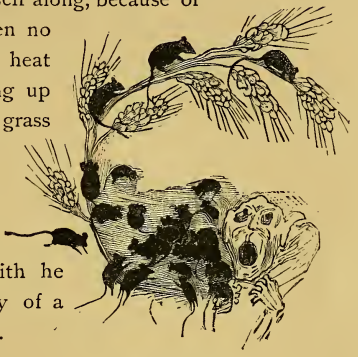
The next morning it was gone. Only the fragments of the broken flower-pot lay scattered on the sidewalk. The storm had blown it down in the night, said the old woman, who tied white crape upon the door, and wondered what had become of the flower. "Some boys must have carried it away, and it mattered little," she said, "for it was quite dead and worthless." But I knew better than that. I knew that the little

face and the flower were both transplanted to that heavenly garden where the angels walk, and I sighed when I thought how I should miss them from my morning walk, but I knew that they were rejoicing together there above.

I have told you the story, O children, that it may teach you also this lesson the flower taught to me: That patience, cheerfulness, self-sacrifice, and humility are the qualities that fit human souls for that garden of the Lord; and no duty well performed is unheeded in His sight.

THE STORY OF A FAMINE.

THE August Wind came panting over the brow of the hill, weak and languid, hardly able to drag itself along, because of the intense heat; for there had been no rain for weeks and weeks, and the heat was wilting the blossoms and drying up the brooks, and scorching the very grass of the meadows. "If we do not have rain soon," sighed the Wind, "the wheat and corn will yield no crop at all, and then there will be famine in the land!" And forthwith he began to tell the tree-tops this story of a famine whcih prevailed centuries ago.



A STORY OF A FAMINE.

Gaunt Famine was out in the German land,
The peasants were starving on either hand—
Were dying by hundreds, of hunger and pain,
While Bishop Hatto had stores of grain!
The Convent cellars with grain were stocked,
With bolt and padlock the doors he locked
On the good plump grain, all yellow as gold,
Packed close and high as the vaults could hold.
The little children he met in his ride

Were ashen and trembling and hollow-eyed :
" Lord Bishop," they pleaded, " for Christ's sake—bread ! "
"*Benedicite !* " mocking, the Bishop said.
The famishing people begged and prayed
For a tithe of the grain in the cellars laid.
Cried Hatto : " The famine would sooner cease
If the world were rid of such rascals as these."
So he sent a message on every side,
And gathered the beggars from far and wide :
" Let them assemble to-morrow morn
Under the roof of my largest barn ;
Corn for the winter they shall not need ! "
His artful promise he kept indeed ;
Women, and children, and gaunt-eyed men
Thronged into the ample barn ; and then
When the windows were barred and doors were locked,
The wicked Bishop their hunger mocked ;
He set a torch to the floor and wall—
In a raging fire he burned them all !
" And now the famine will end in a trice ! "
Cried Hatto. " These beggers were like the mice
That eat up the corn they did not plant.
Peace to their ashes.—No more they 'll want.
And soon each grain that my good vaults hold
Shall change to its weight in shining gold."
And straightway, the legend tellers aver,
Down in the vaults came a rustle and stir,
And each little grain that was stored in the house
Changed into a ravenous, gnawing mouse !
After a dinner remarkably fine,
The Bishop sat dozing over his wine,
When all of a sudden he was aware
Of a soughing and sobbing that filled the air.
The Bishop started up from his doze,
And drowsily asked, " What sounds are those ? "

" Those," said a monk, " are the curses loud
That daily rise from the famished crowd.
For ten that you burned a score remain."
Quoth Hatto, " We 'll build the fire again
If they grow too bold.—But let them curse,
For a peasant's wrath who was ever the worse ? "
Like the sighing of souls that writhe in pain,
Close at hand rose the sound again.
" That," said the sacristan, " is the prayer
Of the hundreds perishing in despair."
" Let 'em pray," said Hatto, " with all my heart !
But me and my corn they shall never part."
"*Nevermore !*" cried a voice like a mocking elf,
And the Bishop shuddered and crossed himself,
And the cheek of the sacristan blanched with fear,
As the soughing and sighing drew more near,
And there came a pattering on the stair :
" *Jesu !*" cried Hatto, " What feet are there ? "
Back with a crash flew the oaken door,
And an army of mice poured over the floor—
An army of pattering, starving mice,
That fixed on the Bishop their glowing eyes—
Mice to the right, and mice to the left,
Mice in each chimney and window-cleft,
Everywhere clustered a hungry horde ;
They climbed to the top of the festal board,
They ate the meats, and they drained each cup,
They turned to the dishes and ate them up ;
Off from each panel and picture frame
They nibbled the Bishop's arms and name,
And gnawed the hangings of purple down,
And nibbled the edge of the Bishop's gown.
Monk and prior and sacristan
Shrank in afright from the guilty man.
" I 've an island-tower in the midst of the Rhine,

I shall be safe in that tower of mine—
Quick ! " cried Hatto.—Away he fled.
Over the blue Rhine stream he sped ;
Never an instant he paused until
His feet passed over the marble sill ;
He clanged and bolted the metal door—
" Now," said the Bishop, " my fears are o'er."
Close on his track, with the speed of the blast,
Over the water the mouse-storm passed.
They ate the stone sill as if it were cheese,
And passed through the metal door with ease.
With a step as swift as the step of doom,
They climbed the tower to the topmost room.
The death-struck Bishop saw them glide
Nearer and nearer on every side ;
Out of the casement, with a scream,
He sought to plunge to the rushing stream ;
But ere he could climb to the window-cleft—
There was nothing at all of the Bishop left !

" How can I tell if the facts are so ? "
It happened long years and years ago ;
But if you doubt what the truth may be,
Just watch some night by the tower and see !
For oft at midnight, the Rhine folks tell,
The ghost of the Bishop wakes with a yell,
And dashes out of the island tower ;
While after him madly the swift mice pour
In a red-hot sulphurous stream, that swirls
And surges about him as he whirls !
And the boldest boatmen, passing there,
Make the hurried sign of the cross in the air,
And, clutching the oar in wild afright,
Row swiftly away from the dreadful sight.

BLUETTE.

"ONCE upon a time," began the September Wind, ——

"Ah, ah-h!" sighed the little hemlocks, "*that* is the way to begin!"

"Hush-sh-h!" said the pine-trees, nodding to them to be silent.

"Poof!" said the Wind. "Now I must begin it all over! This is the story of

BLUETTE,

THE LITTLE GIRL WHO TRIED TO FIND THE END OF THE RAINBOW.

Once upon a time there was a little girl called Bluette. Her eyes were blue, and her ribbons were blue, and she loved to wear a long blue cloak; so when Alfred one day called her "Bluette" everybody saw the fitness of the name, and from that day to this Bluette she has remained.

She was a good little maid, and every one loved her dearly,—even her brothers Tom and Alfred, who could not forbear teasing her. She was such a simple-minded little thing, and believed literally every thing which was told her, and at times the boys could not help playing upon her credulity.

"She is so gullible!" cried Tom. "'Gulliver's Travels' and 'Munchausen' are gospel to her. A fellow can't help cramming her just to see how much she *can* believe."

But for all that they heartily loved her; and after the adventure I am going to relate, they were very careful not to wilfully mislead her.

It was a rainy autumn afternoon, and Alfred and Tom were beguiling the time by reading aloud portions of "The Faerie Queene" of Spenser. Nobody thought of Bluette, and the boys would have scouted the idea that such a little thing could be listening to such a book; but the doll's

tea-party in the corner was quite neglected while Bluette sat, with folded hands and round eyes, drinking in the story of Una and the Red Cross Knight.

Presently a rift in the clouds let a bright sunbeam through, and the boys rushed to the window. "Come quick, Bluette," said Tom, "and see the rainbow!"

Bluette climbed on a chair and looked out at the bright bow in the sky.

"Look!" said Tom. "The end seems to come down in the road just on the other side of the hill; the crock of gold must be buried right in the centre of the road."

"What crock of gold?" asked Bluette.

"Goosie!" cried Tom. "Did no one ever tell you Nurse Sarah's old story, that just where the rainbow touches the earth a pot of gold is buried, guarded by a dragon, a fairy, and an old witch? If you give an apple to the dragon, it won't harm you; if you give the witch a piece of white bread, she will call the fairy; then you must say three times:

"'Fairy, fairy, light and free,
Find the treasure-crock for me;
A silver penny I'll give to thee!'

and the fairy will dig up the treasure—only first you must give him the silver penny."

"Nonsense, Tom," called Alfred from the sofa to which he had returned. "Don't tell her such a thing, for she will believe it all. Tell her the story is not true."

But it was too late, for Bluette was gone.

"She's off to the nursery, I suppose," said Tom. "I'll tell her when she comes in. What a precious little gull she is, to be sure!" And the lads went back to their book and forgot all about the matter for the next hour.

Down stairs in great haste went Bluette to the library. There was no time to be lost! She found papa reading the paper, and approached him with, "Papa, I do so wish I had a silver penny!"

"A silver penny! Never saw one in my life, my dear! But won't a gold dollar do as well?" and he took from his purse the little gold coin and laid it in her rosy palm. "I forgot to give it to you before. A man gave it to me in change to-day, and I thought at once, 'That will be nice for Bluette.'"

"Is it all mine?—to buy just what I please?" said the little maid, putting up her face for a kiss.

"Of course," replied her father.

Bluette danced away in delight. "A gold dollar is better than a silver penny! The fairy's hand is so little, it can hold such a little piece of money better than a great silver penny!"

Then she ran to the kitchen, and asked Bridget for a piece of bread and an apple.

"Is it for yoursilf ye 'll be wantin' it, miss?" said Bridget. "I 'll give ye some jam too."

"N-n-o," she answered, "it 's not for me. It 's for an old woman." She did not like to say "an old witch."

Bridget buttered two large slices and gave them to her, together with a nice red apple, and Bluette hurried off to the nursery. She found a little basket and placed them in it, and holding the gold dollar all the time firmly clasped in her hand, she put on her hat and her little blue cloak, and taking up the basket ran out into the rain.

The sun was still shining, and the rainbow still brightly defined against the background of gray clouds, as Bluette hurried out of the gate and down the road, straight on toward the end of the rainbow and its buried treasure.

"I 'll buy me a new set of little dishes," said Bluette, "and another wax doll—one that has *real* yellow curls, and open-and-shut eyes; and I 'll dress her in a gold dress, and pink stockings, and blue slippers. And I ll buy a Shetland pony for Tom, and lots of fire-crackers and a gun for Alfred, and a silk dress for Bridget—and—and all the rest I 'll give to mamma and papa. O-o-oh! Won't it be splendid!"

She fairly danced with pleasure, and disappeared over the brow of the hill, singing

"Fairy, fairy, light and free,
Find the treasure-crock for me;
A silver penny I 'll give to thee!"

Nobody saw the little figure in the blue cloak as it passed over the brow of the hill.

"Where is Bluette?" asked some one an hour later.

"Bluette! Bluette! Blu-ette!" called a dozen voices; but no Bluette answered to the call.

"She cannot have left the house, because of the rain," said one; and forthwith papa, mamma, the boys, and the servants began a zealous search through every nook and corner. But the search was all in vain, and when it was ended they stood looking at each other with frightened faces.

"I have not seen her since she was looking out of the window at the rainbow," said Alfred.

"Nor I, since I gave her the gold dollar," said papa.

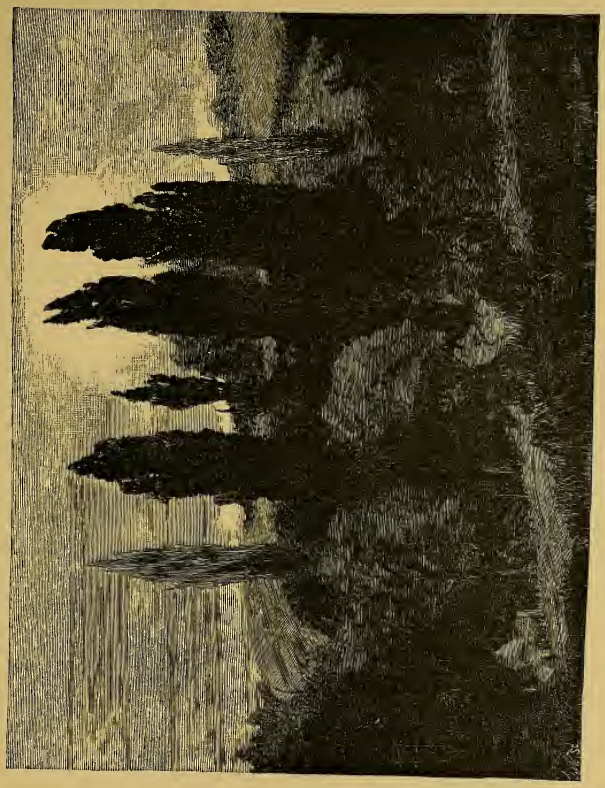
"Tom!" said Alfred, with a start, "she believed every word of that yarn with which you were cramming her!"

"She came to me kitchen not an hour ago, I 'll be sworn, ma'am," said Bridget, wiping her eyes on her apron. "An' I was afther givin' her bread an' jam, an' an apple. Och, an' to think the little darlint is lost now! The howly angels be her guard!"

"O–oh!" groaned Tom, "*she has gone to the end of the rainbow!*" And he dashed, hatless, out of the house toward the garden-gate. Just at the same moment there was a loud ring at the gate-bell, and a trampling of hoofs. Tom threw open the gate, and there stood Bluette, with her cloak drawn over her head and her basket at her feet. There was no one else in sight except a gentleman who was riding down the road.

"Here she is!" cried Tom, kissing his little sister, and catching her up in his arms; and when he carried her into the house there was something on Tom's cheeks that looked like two big drops of rain. They *might* have been rain-drops, you know, shaken down by the trees. Still I don't believe they were.

"But I did n't find the end of the rainbow," said Bluette, when the wet slippers and stockings had been replaced by dry ones, and she came



"OVER THE BROW OF THE HILL."

down to sit upon her father's knee by the fireside. Her mother was seated beside the table with her sewing. Alfred was leaning on his father's chair, and Tom's face beamed upon her from the hearth-rug, where he had seated himself to listen to the story. Nobody wanted to lose sight of their recovered treasure. Even Bridget could not help putting her head in at the door from time to time to assure herself that "the blessid darlint" was really safe at home.

"After I ran down the hill," continued Bluette, "I went on and on for a long time, till at last I met an old woman. I thought she must be the old witch; but I did not like to ask her. She looked so poor and thin that I asked her if she was hungry, and she said 'Yes.' So I gave her all the bread and butter out of the basket, and the apple too; and she ate them right up, and said: 'God bless you! and may you never know hunger yourself!' Then she went away, and I ran on to meet the fairy. I hurried as fast as I could; for the faster I ran the farther off the end of the rainbow seemed to be. Pretty soon I saw a boy coming, and I thought that must be the fairy; so I ran toward him, and called out quite loud:

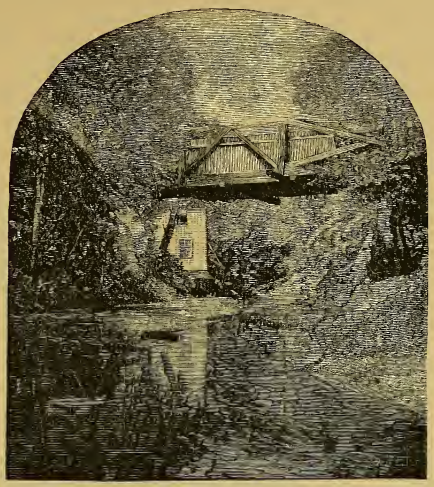
"'Fairy, fairy, light and free,
Find the treasure-crock for me;
A silver penny I 'll give to thee!'

just as Tom told me to say it. But the little boy burst out crying, and said he was n't a fairy at all: only Teddy O'Brien, who lived down by the old mill, and his father was very sick, and he had lost the money his mother gave him to buy the medicine that might have made his father well. The money fell out of his hand while he was running, and he had hunted for it for a long time, and could not find it anywhere. It was the last bit of money they had, he said, and now his father would die for want of the medicine. Then he cried again, and I felt so sorry for him I was going to cry too; only just then I happened to think of my gold dollar. So I gave him the gold-piece, and told him to buy medicine with it; and he took it, and hurried away as fast as he could go, laughing and crying both at once.

"But while I was talking to the boy, I forgot to look at the rainbow;

and, when he ran off, it was gone, and I did n't know what to do. I looked and looked, but it did not come out in the sky any more, and I did not know where I was, and I was so tired! So I sat down on a big log beside the mile-stone and waited. I thought maybe the Red Cross Knight would come to help me. And after a time I heard a horse's tramp and saw him coming——"

"Saw the Red Cross Knight?" cried Tom.



"I don't know. He did n't have any armor, nor any spear; and the cloak he wore was black," said she. "But I thought p'r'aps that was the way he dressed nowadays. So when he came near, I stood up by the mile-stone and said: 'Please would you be so kind as to take me home to mamma?'

"He took me right up before him on the saddle, and asked me whose little girl I was. I told him I was Bluette, and papa was Mr. Benson, and I lived in a house with a high stone wall around it. He said he knew the place, and would put me down at the gate. Then he wanted to know how I came to be sitting by the mile-stone; and I told him about the

rainbow and the crock of gold, and how I gave away the gold dollar and found the rainbow had gone out.

"He said the story about the crock of gold was only a fable, but that I was not the first one who had gone a long way to seek a visionary treasure only to find it disappear. Then he told me about Noah and the ark, and the rainbow after the flood; and by that time we came to the gate, and he lifted me down, and rang the bell, and rode away. Do you s'pose, Tom," she concluded, turning her wondering blue eyes toward her brother, "Do you s'pose the Red Cross Knight would wear gold spectacles? He must be pretty old by this time, you know."

"Oh—oh—oh!" roared Tom and Alfred, and rushed from the room to have their laugh out comfortably.

"But who could the gentleman have been?" said mamma, while papa took the little girl upon his knee and began to explain to her the allegory of the Faerie Queene.

"Please, ma'am, I saw him," said Bridget. "It was Mr. St. George, the new minister over at Alston."

"Ay, ay, I have heard of him," said papa. "He is a good man and an earnest preacher, 'constant in well-doing,' and brave and staunch in every battle for the right. Perhaps Bluette was not so far wrong in calling him the Red Cross Knight. I 'll call on him to-morrow and thank him for coming to the aid of our little Una here."

And so he did; and Mr. St. George soon came to be a welcome guest in the house, and one of Bluette's best friends.

It is beautiful to think how often our foolish fancies and our own disappointments are made to "work together for good" to others.

Even Bluette's wild chase after the impossible rainbow-treasure was not wholly in vain: for the medicine and food which Teddy was able to buy with the gold dollar saved the life of his father; and Bluette's one little gold-piece bestowed in loving charity, brought her more enduring pleasure than she could have purchased with all the Fairy Treasure.

POLLY'S PROMISE.

"TELL us a *true* story, Wind!" shouted the saucy hemlocks. "Tell us a *boy* story!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the roystering October Wind. "Boys will be boys, the world over! Here, then, you little fellows, is the story of——

POLLY'S PROMISE.

Polly was a boy.

That 's solid fact; for *all* this story is "not a fairy story, but a truly one."

Odd, was n't it? I suppose none of you ever knew a boy called Polly; and in fact all the Pollies I 've known myself were girls; but this Polly was, as I said, a boy.

Not that he was christened so, of course. Most likely he was never christened at all. His real name was Paul Fisher, but the boys had called him "Poll" first, and then "Polly," till finally it was forgotten that Polly was n't his genuine name—the name to be put to a president's message or a police docket, as the case might be.

Black eyes had Polly—such snappers! and brown, wavy hair, not too smooth, if the truth must be told; a funny "tip-tilted" nose, and a mouth that came to with a snap, like a well-hung gate—you never saw *that* mouth stand gaping open like a door that has lost a hinge; grimy hands, from which, nevertheless, he had made some attempts to wash the dirt, as he had from his face—which displayed a patch of moderately clean skin, including the "tip-tilted" nose, the mouth, and half of each cheek, while the rest of the countenance was left in its original darkness—and his age, he told Miss Elspeth, was "'bout half-past 'leven."

Who was Miss Elspeth, and what had she to do with Polly?

To be sure. I 've begun all wrong, and now I 'll just have to go right back and tell all about her.

Elspeth was a girl. Now most girls of seventeen, I know, would be vexed at being called any thing else than a young lady—a name which in these days means usually a nondescript creature, half school-girl and half woman of society; too pert and forward and world-wise for the former —too crude and unformed and wanting in polish for the latter. But Elspeth was not a young lady. That title she reserved for the time when she should lay aside her studies and go into society. At present she was only a school-girl ; but a school-girl with a good deal of superfluous energy wanting to be utilized, and with a keen desire to do some little mite of good in her day and generation. So when the minister announced one Sunday that there was great need of teachers in the Mission Sunday-school, and that none were wanted except those who would be present, rain or shine, the year round, Elspeth gave an emphatic little nod (right in church !) and said to herself, " I 'll do it."

This is how that Mission School came to be. There was a brave soldier, who fought all through the late war, and during the long marches and the tedious waitings in camps he turned over in his mind a certain plan. " If I get home again," he said, " I 'll be of some little good in that old city. I 'll do something or other for the little street ragamuffins that never get any home teaching. I 'll have a Sunday-school especially for such boys and girls."

And when the war was ended and this soldier put away his general's uniform for a civilian's dress and went back to his every-day work, he did n't lay aside his resolution with his sword and hat ; he had his Sunday-school. " Feed my lambs." Such lambs as these were ! gathered from the highways and by-ways, dirty, ragged, and bad. But the soldier-teacher was determined to help them somehow, and—somehow—he did. It was something to learn ever so little about heaven and goodness.

Polly went originally " for a lark." " High old times there ! " said Pat Maginnis, " an' thin av yez are good they give yez a red ticket aich Sunday, an' foive red tickets git a blue one, an' fur that they give yez something to wear—a hat or a jacket, or mebbe shoes now. That 's how I got thim trousers ; swell ones—hi ? "

That was the way of it, you see. Most of the little rag-tags went at first for the "high jinks," and then they found it "paid" to behave and get tickets, and gradually they learned to like order for its own sake and to listen to the lessons.

And that is how Polly came to be waiting there on the bench when Miss Elspeth walked into the class that Sunday afternoon.

She took a quick survey of the twenty-five faces. Some were rather good, some decidedly vicious. Miss Elspeth's hand tightened unconsciously, as it used to do over the rein when she rode the most skittish pony in the country side. She took in Polly's face in that glance, and approved it. Odd rather it was, but then Elspeth was a little "odd" herself. She did not care much for French-polish; she liked to watch human nature in the rough, and looked right through the superficial layers to that real core. "I shall like that boy," she thought.

They did n't give her much time for thought, though, those twenty-five incipient rowdies. This was the new teacher; they meant to find out what she was like. "Put her through her paces!" Pat had said. They were not called "the worst lot in the room" for nothing. They had frightened away two teachers already, and they meant to keep up their prestige. So presently Pandemonium began. They whistled, they whooped, shuffled their feet, giggled, made audible comments, pulled wry faces, and coughed as if in the last stages of consumption. They asked her where she got the plume in her hat, and who made her dress; told her that her nose was "a regular snub" (this from Polly!), and wanted to know "how much that store hair cost"—suggesting finally that she had better go home to her mother, for they did n't want any *girl* to teach *them.*

Elspeth waited till the tumult gradually toned down, then she laid the Bible and class-book on a chair and rose to her feet. The class, led by Pat and Polly, vociferated "Speech! speech!" Elspeth faced round to the two benches, looking straight at the ringleaders, and began her inaugural:

"Boys! You want a speech. All right; here it is. I 'm going to teach in this school. I 'm going to teach *you.* They tell me you 're a

bad lot. Now I don't believe that. Anyhow, there are plenty of nice bright faces here, and the boys with those faces will help me keep order. (Each boy looked at his neighbor's face and wondered how his own looked.) I can't run this class without help from you; but if you 'll help with a will I believe we can make this the best class in the school. The question is, are there to be twenty-five Captains and one private in this Company, or am I to be Captain and you my soldiers. ("Hooray for Captain Elspeth!" from Pat and Polly, and a giggle from the rest.) All right; I 'm Captain! Attention, Company!" Then she told them her plan for lessons and took her seat. There was plenty of determination about her mouth, but there was also a twinkle in her eye. Take it all in all, the boys rather liked the new commander's face.

"She 's plucky," said Polly. "Faix, thin she 'll do," was Pat's approving response.

Don't think they settled down into full-fledged cherubs at once. Not a bit of it. There was plenty of struggling at first, and Elspeth had pressing need of all the pluck she possessed; but she did her very best, and earnest endeavor always tells in the end. She went to work by trying first of all to attach them to herself, knowing that when scholars like their teacher the teacher's work is already half done. She taught them less of doctrine than of practical, every-day morality; until they came to see that religion was not altogether a something shut up in books for the learned to argue about, but a living motive power that had to do with every thought and act of every day. She tried, too, to interest herself in all that most interested them, and encouraged them to talk to her of their individual hopes and fears, and as a consequence the subjects discussed were odd enough; every theme dear to the boy heart came up in those brief conversations that went off at a tangent from the original lesson, and Elspeth got constantly fresh insight into boy-nature.

"What makes a gentleman?" she asked suddenly, one day, when the interest in the lesson flagged visibly. And the boys who could not or would not grasp the full meaning of the Beatitudes she was teaching, roused at once at the question.

"Swell rig," "plug," "patent leathers," "di'mon' pin," "2:40 nag,"

"lots o' chink," were the prompt responses showered from all sides. Elspeth thought sadly that a good many older and better-trained boys would probably give the same definition, but she said:

"Not a bit of it. A gentleman is one who never will lie, or steal, or do any thing mean. Every boy in this class can be a gentleman if he tries hard enough. Nothing you can put on from the outside can make one; it 's the things that are *inside* that make a real, true man."

Now that was a new idea to the youngsters, and made an impression accordingly. Presently one of them ventured a remark.

"A feller don't have to eat off o' chiny an' wear swell clothes to be a gentleman?"

"No," said Elspeth; "but whatever he does wear ought to be as clean and neat as he can make it."

"Patches?" said Pat, looking at a large one on his neighbor's knee.

"Patches are better than tatters. Another thing; a gentleman always keeps himself nice and neat. He brushes his hair and teeth, and his boots, if he has them, and he keeps his hands and face free from dirt—and his nails."

Out came the pocket-knives in a trice and every boy set to work cleaning and trimming his finger-nails.

Polly had been turning the thing over in his head, trying to grasp this new idea of what makes a gentleman. Presently he succeeded in translating it into his own vernacular, and gave Miss Elspeth and the class the benefit of his conclusions.

"A gentleman," says Polly, impressively, "is a cove that won't do any thing that 's skunky."

Miss Elspeth thought she had certainly found a new word. She translated mentally, "Skunky, *i. e.*, mean, low, bad—that 's it"; then she said aloud, "Yes."

Polly said thoughtfully: "It 's mean to hook things 'n' tell whoppers."

"Yes," said Elspeth.

"An' to lick a feller littler 'n you, 'n' to go back on a promise, an' to sass yer mother!" Polly's eyes brightened at each addition to the definition; evidently his ideas on the subject were rapidly clearing up.

Directly his face clouded, "Don't a chap have to belong to the nice folks, though?"

"That 's not a necessity; he has a better start if he belongs to the 'nice folks,' as you say; but after all, a gentleman makes himself, you know, and the 'nice folks' are just outside things like the fine clothes and the china and the rest."

Now, was n't it too bad? Just when Miss Elspeth congratulated herself that she had succeeded in instilling an idea, Pat happened to tread on Polly's toes, and instantly there ensued such a volley of oaths as almost turned her faint.

"Another thing, boys," said Elspeth, "a gentleman never uses such words as those. I know you hear a great deal of such language out in the streets, and perhaps at home; but if one of you wants to be a gentleman, he must give up swearing." Then she went back to the lesson.

Presently Polly twitched her dress to attract her attention, and whispered: "Teacher!"

"Well."

"It 's—it 's skunky to swear, aint it?"

"Yes," said Elspeth, decidedly.

"Tell yer what I 'll do," said Polly, after some deliberation; "I 'll say I won't ever swear here in school; but I don't want to promise not to do it outside, 'cause I might break my word, you know."

"I like that," said Elspeth, mentally. "That boy has some regard for truth, at any rate."

Polly lingered after the rest departed, standing on one foot at a time, twisting his apology for a cap inside out, and casting furtive glances at the teacher, as she gathered up her muff and books; then, as Miss Elspeth turned to say good-by, he burst forth, with face glowing with resolution:

"I want to promise you something. I won't swear in the class, not ever; and I 'll quit swearing anywhere as soon as I can. I won't do any thing mean if I know it; and look here! some day I 'm going to be a gentleman. Now I 'm going to try; you 'll see."

And he did try. Elspeth certainly never heard him swear, and by quiet inquiry she found that he soon gave up the habit altogether. He

was a ringleader still; but his power was used for good instead of evil. He was a power in the class, and after a while Elspeth often wondered what she should have done without him. It was Polly who awed the naughtiest boy into order (by surreptitious threats of "a reg'lar thrashin'," I grieve to say), who induced Pat to abandon his favorite practice of standing on his head during the Lord's Prayer at the close of school; who frowned down all attempts to drop a pencil down a neighbor's back or to pull hair or pinch; and to Polly's example, as well as to Elspeth's precept was owing the fact that the class which once enjoyed the reputation of being "the worst lot in the school," came in time to be the most orderly.

All that happened a year ago. Now do you want to know more of the story? One Sunday Polly stayed behind the class after school, and when Miss Elspeth gathered up her books she turned to the waiting face and said, "What is it, Paul?" And Polly told her how he had been looking about for something to do, and how, at last, he had succeeded in getting a place "to do chores in a big store."

Sunday after Sunday then Elspeth noticed certain little additions to Polly's wardrobe; now it was a pair of shoes, now a jacket or hat, till finally he had achieved a whole suit of neat clothes. "Paid for 'em myself, every cent," he told her one day. "Had to get 'em a piece at a time, though, fer I give most of the money to mother every Saturday night." That was the same day he told her he had gone into the night schools, and was going to have something of an education.

One day Elspeth discovered the owner of the "big store" was an old friend of her father, and she asked him about Paul, and told what she knew of him. "H'm!" said the merchant; "he 's sharp and spry. Not a lazy bone in him, I 've noticed, and honest. If he keeps on as he 's begun, some day I shall give him a chance." And the old gentleman nodded his head thoughtfully.

Elspeth did n't know exactly what "a chance" meant, but she had an undefined idea that it was something for Polly's good, and I think she was right.

At any rate, I am sure that he has started right; and I believe that the whole of Polly's promise will be kept, and whoever sees Mr. Paul Fisher twenty years hence will see a gentleman.

THE NOVEMBER WIND'S STORY.

THE WEDDING OF THE GOLD PEN AND THE INKSTAND.

THE Gold Pen wooed the Inkstand.

The Inkstand was of crystal, with a carved silver top. It evidently came of an aristocratic family, and was, therefore, a fitting match for the Gold Pen, which was also an aristocrat, and carried itself haughtily toward the Goose-Quill and the Steel Pens, its poor relations.

The wedding was a splendid affair. All the inhabitants of the Library Table were invited, and the great Unabridged Dictionary—the true Autocrat of the Writing-Table—gave away the bride; while the fat Pen-Wiper, in scarlet and black plush, sobbed audibly. (Not that there was any thing to sob about, but she had heard that it was customary to cry at weddings.)

After the ceremony, "the happy pair received the congratulations of their large and distinguished circle of acquaintances," as the newspaper reporters say.

"Many happy returns of the auspicious event!" blundered the Goose-Quill, claiming his privilege, as a relation, of kissing the bride. The Goose-Quill had got itself a new nib for the occasion, and quite plumed itself on its appearance.

"Wish you joy!" said the Steel Pen, a brisk, business-like sort of fellow, leading forward the Pen-Wiper.

"Joy!" echoed the Pen-Wiper, with a fresh burst of sobs.

"May life's cares rest lightly upon you!" said the Paper-Weight.

"Stick to each other through thick and thin!" said the Mucilage-Bottle.

"May the impress of the beloved image be indelible in each heart!" said the phial of Marking-Fluid.

"I congratulate you, madame!" exclaimed the quire of Legal-Cap. "The bridegroom is a distinguished fellow—'*Stylus potentior quam gladius!*' Pardon the Latin; but we lawyers, you know—He! he!" and he retired with a smirk, quite satisfied with his display of erudition.

"Live ever in a Fool's Paradise!" growled the Foolscap, who was a disappointed old bachelor.

"May the Star of Love never set in the heaven of your happiness!" simpered the rose-tinted Note-Paper, who was always fearfully sentimental, and was rumored to be herself in love with the Violet Ink.

> "Jove from your heads avert his awful wrath,
> And shower blessings on your future path!"

sighed the Violet Ink, who was said to have actually written poetry!

(At this the Note-Paper turned a shade rosier, and murmured, "How sweet!")

"Come right up to the mark of duty," said the old Black-Walnut Ruler, "and your line of life will never go crooked!"

"May love be never erased from your hearts!" said the Ink-Eraser.

"And may nothing ever divide you!" said the Ivory Paper-Cutter.

"Let all your actions bear the right *stamp;* and, above all, *never tell a lie!*" said the Postage-Stamp (which bore the portrait of George Washington, and must therefore be excused for introducing the latter remark).

"Don't let the little *rubs* of life wear out your mutual kindliness, my dears!" said the matronly old India-Rubber.

"Hech, lad!" cried the little Scotch-plaid Index, that came tumbling out of a volume of Burns. "A lang life and a happy one to you an' your bonny bride!"

"May you always be wrapped up in each other!" said the package of Envelopes, who came up in a body.

"Though the Gordian Knot was cut," said the Penknife (a sharp chap), "may this True-Lover's Knot never be severed!"

"I hope you 'll make your mark in life," said the blunt old Lead-Pencil.

"Look closely," said a Pocket-Microscope, "but for virtues—not for faults!"

"May the remembrance of each unkind deed or word be quickly blotted out!" exclaimed the Blotting-Pad.

"Bless ye, my children, bless ye! Be happy!" said the Big Dictionary, in the (theatrically) paternal manner.

The Gold Pen and the Inkstand did not make a wedding tour, but went to live immediately in a beautiful bronze Standish in the centre of the Writing-Table.

And there they are at this very minute.

"Thank you, Wind, thank you!" murmured the tree-tops.

Then away sped the November Wind "over bank, bush, and brae," while the pine-trees nodded drowsily to each other.

But Some One who had listened to the Winds' stories, said: "I will gather all the stories together, and make a little book for the children; for I know three, at least, who will like to hear

"WHAT THE WIND TOLD TO THE TREE-TOPS.'

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